

## **MINUTES**

### **MONTANA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES 59th LEGISLATURE - REGULAR SESSION**

#### **SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

**Call to Order:** By **CHAIRMAN MONICA LINDEEN**, on February 11, 2005  
at 3:28 P.M., in Room 303 Capitol.

#### **ROLL CALL**

**Members Present:**

Rep. Monica Lindeen, Chairman (D)  
Rep. Bill E. Glaser, Vice Chairman (R)  
Rep. Norma Bixby (D)  
Rep. Tim Dowell (D)  
Rep. Dave Gallik (D)  
Rep. Bob Lake (R)  
Rep. Holly Raser (D)  
Rep. Jon Sonju (R)

**Members Excused:** None.

**Members Absent:** Rep. Verdell Jackson (R)  
Rep. Pat Wagman (R)

**Staff Present:** Connie Erickson, Legislative Branch  
Kim Leighton, Committee Secretary  
Chris Lohse, Legislative Branch  
Eddy McClure, Legislative Branch  
Jim Standaert, Legislative Branch

**Please Note.** These are summary minutes. Testimony and discussion are paraphrased and condensed.

**Committee Business Summary:**

Hearing & Date Posted: HB 125, 2/7/2005  
Executive Action:

*{Tape: 1; Side: A; Approx. Time Counter: 0 - 0.7}*

**HEARING ON HB 125**

**Sponsor:** REP. HOLLY RASER, HD 98, MISSOULA

**Opening Statement by Sponsor:**

REP. RASER introduced herself and HB 125. She discussed the fiscal note for this bill and what it contains. She stressed that the importance of this is not the formula, but the rationale. HB 125 is a bridge. She discussed trends as illustrated in a document she provided.

**EXHIBIT**(esh34a01)

*{Tape: 1; Side: A; Approx. Time Counter: 0.7 - 11.2}*

(REP. PAT WAGMAN entered.)

REP. RASER continued by stating that the turnover rate in Montana is devastating. She discussed the accreditation standards. She also spoke of the relative expenditures in certain school districts. REP. RASER commented on a reading program that she is involved with and how rewarding it is for her. She stressed that the state needs to have well-trained teachers; this will in turn lead to better outcomes.

*{Tape: 1; Side: A; Approx. Time Counter: 11.2 - 26.5}*

**Proponents' Testimony:**

**Linda McCulloch, State Superintendent, Office of Public Instruction(OPI)**, offered her support on HB 125. She discussed the benefits of this bill. There would be an increase of approximately \$77.8 million over the next two years. She provided specific statistics to portray how important HB 125 is.

**Erik Burke, Montana Education Association-Montana Federation of Teachers(MEA-MFT)**, stated that he has worked just under a decade on school funding. He returned to Montana in 1997 to work for former Governor Marc Racicot. He repeated testimony that he used in 1999; he felt it was relevant to the problem today. HB 125 is a tremendous step forward.

**Jack Copps, Montana Quality Education Coalition(MQEC)**, encouraged the committee members to communicate with local school boards. He stated that HB 125 is a good bill, but it needs to be coupled with other components to really be useful. He added that, "Children of this state cannot afford to wait until this system is fixed."

**Sandy Olson, Montana Association for Gifted and Talented Students**, stood in support of HB 125.

**Paul Huber, Superintendent, Wolf Point Public Schools**, stated that he has been in Wolf Point for 20 months. He told the story of a young boy laying on the floor unable to communicate. He had not been taught the proper skills.

**Bob Vogel, Montana School Board Association(MTSBA), Montana Rural Education Association(MREA)**, stated that HB 125 is an important component for issues going through the legislature this session.

**Darrell Rud, School Administrators of Montana(SAM)**, urged his support for HB 125.

**REP. NORMA BIXBY, HD 41, LAME DEER** stated that our public schools need financial support. The state cannot afford to see Indian teachers leaving Montana.

*{Tape: 1; Side: B; Approx. Time Counter: 0 - 19.9}*

**Opponents' Testimony:** None.

**Informational Testimony:** None.

*{Tape: 1; Side: B; Approx. Time Counter: 19.9 - 20.3}*

**Questions From The Committee:**

**REP. GARY BRANAE** asked Ms. Olson to expand on the Gifted and Talented Programs that are available.

**Ms. Olson** gave some statistics on school districts that have these kind of programs available.

**REP. BOB LAKE** asked Mr. Copps to explain if this bill compounds the problem.

**Mr. Copps** discussed Judge Sherlock's decision and intent. He also touched on the 1989 Supreme Court decision.

**REP. LAKE** followed up by asking if the committee would be adding more problems to the equation by passing this bill.

**Mr. Copps** replied by saying that he does not see it compounding the problem.

**REP. DAVE GALLIK** had a follow-up on **REP. LAKE's** comment. He stated that they are through 1/3 of the session; the time is now. How would passing this bill satisfy Judge Sherlock's decision.

**Mr. Copps** stated that the deadline of October 1 gives the legislature plenty of time.

**REP. GALLIK** asked where this money would be plugged in, assuming the legislature is successful.

**Mr. Copps** stated that the money being considered would be plugged into a funding formula.

**REP. JOHN WARD** stated that this is intended to be temporary, immediate relief. He asked if problems with decreasing enrollment are due to per-classroom base versus per-student base.

**Mr. Copps** spoke of what type of funding system might work best.

**REP. TIM DOWELL** asked if it is possible that A & B funding source is an answer.

**Mr. Copps** asked **REP. DOWELL** if he is asking if a new funding system is appropriate.

**REP. DOWELL** clarified by asking if A & B funding is part of the solution.

**Mr. Copps** said, "Yes."

**REP. PAT WAGMAN** asked the sponsor to elaborate on the state share increasing due to accreditation standards and health insurance costs.

**REP. RASER** stated that the accreditation standards are not imposed on school districts; they have a healthy review system.

**REP. WAGMAN** rephrased his question on health insurance in regard to the state's share of money.

**REP. RASER** stated that there are many factors involved; there are many things that need to be implemented. The state has not kept up with inflation.

**VICE CHAIR BILL GLASER** asked Linda McCulloch to reconcile the fiscal note.

*{Tape: 2; Side: A; Approx. Time Counter: 0 - 18}*  
(**REP. VERDELL JACKSON** entered.)

**CHAIR LINDEEN** referred to a similar bill in the Senate. She asked REP. RASER to explain the similarities and the differences.

**REP. RASER** stated that she has not looked at it real close. She does believe that the numbers are very similar.

**REP. MARGARETT CAMPBELL** how Indian Education For All will factor into this bill.

**REP. RASER** stated that there is a separate bill for funding. That is not addressed in HB 125.

**REP. PENNY MORGAN** asked if it is up to each individual school to implement Indian education.

**REP. RASER** commented that OPI has a line item for curriculum for Indian Education For All. Schools will be picking up part of that.

**REP. KATHLEEN GALVIN-HALCRO** asked about funding for Indian Education For All.

**REP. RASER** stated that the funding for Indian education is separate from this bill.

**REP. GALVIN-HALCRO** asked where that bill is today.

**REP. RASER** said she didn't know, and redirected it to Linda McCulloch.

**Ms. McCulloch** explained OPI's involvement with the Indian Education For All bill and the funding components.

**REP. JON SONJU** asked if the sponsor believes that every school is in need of HB 125.

**REP. RASER** said that she believed every school was in need of this bill.

**REP. DAN VILLA** asked for clarification on Page 2 of the fiscal note.

**REP. RASER** stated what she believed it said.

*{Tape: 2; Side: A; Approx. Time Counter: 18 - 27.5}*

**Closing Statement By Sponsor:**

**REP. RASER** closed the discussion on HB 125. She stated that this isn't being done merely to have something to do. She emphasized that the funding must be based on educationally relevant factors. She reiterated that the problem isn't the formula...it's the fact that the funding hasn't been provided. She concluded by saying, "We have the opportunity to effect quality, children and our future."

**CHAIR LINDEEN** closed the hearing with general announcements.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Adjournment: 4:55 P.M.

---

REP. MONICA LINDEEN, Chairman

---

KIM LEIGHTON, Secretary

ML/kl

Additional Exhibits:

**EXHIBIT ([esh34aad0.TIF](#))**